

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PARENTAL ISSUES AND PROSPECTS IN THE STUDY OF MUSIC EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

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Abstract

The progress of humanity is highly dependent on the ways members of society communicate their ideas. Music is relevant in many aspects of human existence. It serves as a vehicle in teaching and promoting societal cultural values and norms and is also a great tool for national development. Despite these benefits of music education to mankind throughout the world, there is still a very low parental perception of music education. This paper examines the causes and effects of poor parental support towards the study of music education of their wards in the University of Port Harcourt. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. It adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study sample comprised 70 students from the Department of Music, the University of Port Harcourt from year two (2) to year four (4) using a simple random sampling technique. Research questionnaire on the Causes, Effects and Remedies of Poor Parental Support towards Music Education in the University of Port – Harcourt were administered. The results of data analysis using the mean (\bar{x}) statistics revealed that the lukewarm attitude of parents towards their children's quest for music Education negatively affect the students' general academic performance. Based on the findings, it is recommended, that Parents should recognize that their role is simply to facilitate their children's career journey and allow them to make guided career choices. Parents should intentionally allow their children to discover their innate talents and skills by encouraging and supporting them. There is a need to be involved, but not in forceful control over the matters of career choice.

Keywords: Music Education, Parental Control, Perception, Prospects and Development Introduction

Humanity refers to the human (man and woman) creature made in the likeness of the Supreme Being. Gifted with qualities and characteristics unidentified to him to grow, apply, and produce an influence on his immediate and outer environment. This being, created with unrestricted freedom and liberty to choose between possibilities, like, love, hate, approve/disapprove, counter and condemn in totality what his nature beams to light. He tends to prefer certain things to others. When he chooses a life partner, his likes/dislikes are religiously nurtured or condemned, though at times with severe reprimand. This transcends into their first important close associates, their offspring. Psychologists have made several attempts at laying bare to us certain conditions/changes which take place in man and his reactions, positive or negative. They have made us understand that humans possess some traits which are innate (probably acquired hereditarily) or born out of influences from relations/interactions/experiences with the outer

society. Musical traits stand out as one of such traits which could be acquired hereditarily, that is, springing from a child's parental musical interest/inclinations. A child is born with it and may, in the course of his growth, development, and exposure, exhibit this trait, or may deliberately ignore it. To Sloboda, Davidson, and Howe (2009).

Folk psychology assumes that differences between people in musical ability are directly caused by inherent biological variability. From birth, some individuals are supposed to have an inborn potential to be musical or have a natural talent or gift for music, or innate aptitude for it (p. 48).

Ignoring the musical trait may depend on a child's sense of valuing. He has several options, like his parents, to choose from. He may naturally prefer what his parents prefer or value. He may, in the same vein, shun his parents' favourites. Parents are significant factors in the development of children's leisure interests and values. Music is a form of human behaviour created by human beings for human beings. This musical behaviour is bound to be influenced by certain factors, namely, biological, social, cultural, and technological factors. Biological factors tend to relate to the makeup of the human and his intrinsic qualities. Humans tend to follow or accept what others do or think and this conformist behaviour can be strong enough to affect musical interests. It is only when there is a sense of valuing and appreciation of attributes that conformity is likely to take effect. Interest, valuing and appreciation, according to Tyler (1986) are sub-categories of the affective objectives of education.

To Tyler, valuing is an emotional commitment, to those cherished objects, activities or ideas which drive or direct the interests, attitudes, and satisfaction of individuals cherishing the objects, activities or ideas. Interest refers to a feeling of curiosity or concern about something that makes the attention turn towards it; or a power, quality or aspect of something that attracts attention, concern or curiosity (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). The goal of music education is not only to provide students with important information on the subject but also to inspire students to continue music participation in the future. Students' future success in music should not be attributed solely to their musical talent. Such factors as motivation, self-concept in music, reading achievement, socioeconomic status, and general intelligence contribute to the musical performance of a child, sometimes even more than musical aptitude. Therefore, there must be an appreciation of the object or thing from which the individual derives joy and satisfaction. Tyler opines in SeungWon Suk, 2014 that: one desires more of the thing he/she appreciates; desires to express himself/herself creatively and identifies himself/herself with the object appreciated. In the light of this, children/wards may tend to appreciate and identify themselves with what they have great passion and desire for which may go contrary to the desires of the parents as regards career choice.

In the Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities, University of Port Harcourt, and in the cause of my investigations and observations of some student's choice of music as a career course of study against their parent's career choice for them, this has affected them negatively in several ways, but to mention a few are; stressful lifestyle (whereby students have to take up multiple jobs, just to meet up with their needs) financial fallbacks (music education program is capital intensive and one needs to be financially stable), poor academic performances due to unstable emotions and family environment which is very instrumental towards achieving excellent result in music education. A stable and structured family life contributes towards sustaining and motivating the necessary learning activities essential for the development of musical skills. Parents influence their children in many ways, and the particular kinds of support they provide may have a major influence on the nature and form of a child's accomplishments. Musically

outstanding individuals tend to have especially supportive parents Howe and Sloboda, (1991) Reflecting on the significance of music education in human lives, Nwankpa (2003) suggest that:

If we have wings to fly into the orbits of musical realms, if we have the wisdom to understand the essence of its being, if we allow ourselves the will to accept its numerous illuminating colours and evocative sonifications and powers, then we will not only be transformed by and awakened to the mystery and uniqueness of this craft, but we will also be able to allow our imagination to soar, igniting our feelings and reflecting the purpose of this art form – God's most spectacular gift to the universe (p. 3).

With the high emphasis on science and technology and low intake of students into music departments of universities across the nation, the opinion of some people points to the fact that academic music study may lose its pride of place in the scheme of things. Besides, most families are not giving their children/wards the needed encouragement and support even when musical traits are glaring in them. Though, Ojukwu and Onyiuke (2014) aver that “effective learning is the product of effective teaching. For both teaching and learning to be effective, much depends on the ability of the teacher who will handle the teaching and learning process and the variables that enhance the teacher effectiveness” (P. 76).

Music education is a discipline that provides all students with a deeper understanding of music, growing awareness and sensitivity of its various meanings in both cultural and individual contexts. Olszewski (1987) sees the home environment as the key element in the development of musical talent, particularly in the early stages of development. Parents' interest and involvement in their children's musical training determine whether the children/wards will continue with music lessons and practice. It is most likely that parental musical interest background may be the strongest predictor of their children's interest in music as a course of study.

The researcher had witnessed many situations where students, having been admitted and enrolled into the department to study music at the University of Port Harcourt, had opted out for other courses. One of the major reasons for such withdrawals had been parental factors (Parents' lukewarm attitude towards the course “Music”). Such parents see music as a course not worth studying in school. It is important to note that music is significant to live. Lucy Ekwueme (2008) opines that: All over the world, people spend hours performing, composing, dancing and listening to music. Music is everywhere, in the streets, clinics, clubs, mosques, restaurants and even some private offices (p.1).

Still, music is considered not worth being a professional course of study in the university by some parents. Amoyedi cited in Essien (2011).

Music education is seen as a weapon for combating ignorance, poverty, and disease; a bridge between confusion and comprehension, a dam for conserving man's stores of civilization, a rocket subservient to a state of intellectual sovereignty, and an instrument par excellence for effective national development (p.45)

These, therefore, place a great demand and responsibility on not only music educators, but everyone inhabiting a geographical entity including parents. Onyiuke (2011), asserts that; “curriculum is a planned and guided learning experience and intended learning outcomes

formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school, for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal social competence" (p.14).

Parents prepare the grounds for teachers. Besides, most families are not giving their children/wards the needed encouragement and support even when musical traits are glaring in them. Every parent wants the best for his/her child. Sometimes these parental wishes go contrary to the desires of their children. Music in Nigeria is still an emerging field and most parents are yet to come to terms with allowing their children/wards to study music as a profession against professions like medicine, law, Engineering and so on. For any student to be successful in academics, he or she requires a stable environment which entails a balance of emotion and financial stability. Therefore, this problem has motivated the researcher to investigate parental issues, the causes and effects of poor parental support towards music education at the University of Port Harcourt. Looking out for the prospect on accounts of the child and providing possible remedies to these problems is the main crux of this study.

Empirical Study on Parental Involvement in their Children/Wards Music Education

Since music education research typically reflects trends in general education research (Creech & Hallam, 2003), a comprehensive review of both music and general education literature is necessary. The following sections describe factors that have been shown to influence parental involvement in children's music education.

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), the three major components of a student SES measure are family income, parental educational attainment, and parental occupational status. Research on children's education generally suggests that parents' SES influences their involvement in children's education. Studies show that parents with lower SES participate in their children's music education much less than parents with higher SES (Lareau, 1989). For instance, parents with a higher level of education are more likely to advocate for their children's placement in honours courses and actively manage their children's school work (Baker & Stevenson, 1986).

Phillips (2003) indicated that American students who have high SES parents have considerably richer musical home environments than those with low-SES parents, stating that high-SES students have greater chances to be exposed to various musical activities since their parents can afford them. For this study, SES will be measured by the participant's highest education degree completed and the family annual income.

Musical Background

Along with parents' socioeconomic status, parents' musical training seems to influence the support they provide to their child's instrumental music learning process. Although research reveals that successful musicians do not necessarily have parents with expert knowledge in music, Margiotta (2011) argues that parents who have a certain amount of musical training may (a) provide their children with more musically minded support, (b) expose them to more concerts and activities that are related to music, and (c) guide them more effectively towards the goals to be accomplished in music education. Conversely, Hallam (1998) claims that parents without musical training are often unacquainted with their role in their child's musical development, they do not play an active role during the lesson and home practise sessions, and they tend only to chaperone their children to and from lessons.

Table 1: Result of the mean (\bar{x}) the Cause of Poor Parental Support in their Wards Desire to Study Music in University of Port Harcourt:

| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|---|------|----------|----|----|
| 1 | Your parents think Music education is not a professional course. | 20 | 12 | 8 | 10 |
| 2 | Music education is a useless course and not worth studying. | 23 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3 | Your parents believe musicians are tagged unserious, so they do not want you to study music at the university. | 26 | 15 | 3 | 6 |
| 4 | Musicians are well respected in society. | 7 | - | 27 | 16 |
| 5 | Your Parents preferred other courses of study for you before gaining admission to study music education in uniport. | 23 | 13 | 11 | 3 |
| 6 | Your Parent advised you to buy a Jamb form to study music at the uniport. | 1 | 9 | 19 | 21 |
| 7 | Your parents were furious when you told them of your desire to study music at uniport. | 23 | 22 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | Your parents were happy when you told them of your desire to study music at uniport. | 4 | 8 | 9 | 29 |
| 9 | Your parents refused to take responsibility for your academics because of your choice for music education. | 23 | 17 | 9 | 1 |
| 10 | Your parents are responsible for your academics not minding your choice for music education. | 4 | 11 | 13 | 22 |
| S/N | ITEMS | X | REMARK | | |
| 1 | Your parents think Music education is not a professional course. | 2.84 | Accepted | | |
| 2 | Music education is a useless course and not worth studying. | 2.88 | Accepted | | |
| 3 | Your parents believe musicians are tagged unserious, so they do not want you to study music at the university. | 3.22 | Accepted | | |
| 4 | Musicians are well respected in society. | 1.96 | Rejected | | |
| 5 | Your Parents preferred other courses of study for you before gaining admission to study music education in uniport. | 3.92 | Accepted | | |
| 6 | Your Parent advised you to buy a Jamb form to study music at the uniport. | 1.72 | Rejected | | |
| 7 | Your parents were furious when you told them of your desire to study music at uniport. | 3.3 | Accepted | | |
| 8 | Your parents were happy when you told them of your desire to study music at uniport. | 1.74 | Rejected | | |
| 9 | Your parents refused to take responsibility for your academics because of your choice for music education. | 3.24 | Accepted | | |
| 10 | Your parents are responsible for your academics not minding your choice for music education. | 1.94 | Rejected | | |

Weighted Grand Mean

2.6

The data in table 4.1 revealed that the items that had their weighted mean scores up to and above the acceptable mean of 2.50 were the positive responses of the respondents on the causes of poor parental support in their wards' desire to study music in uniport. On the other hand, the items that had their weighted mean score below 2.50 were the negative responses of the respondents on the kind of support they get from their Parents in their career choice of Music as a Course of Study in uniport.

The calculated grand mean was 2.6. Therefore, since the result weighted grand mean 2.6 was above the criterion mean of 2.50, the support of parents towards music education in uniport is very poor.

Table 2: Result of the mean (x) the Extent that Poor Parental Support Influences their Children's Academic Performances in Music Education:

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| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Your parent's support for your course has assisted you to a large extent in your academic performance. | 4 | 9 | 10 | 27 |
| 2 | Your academic performance is very poor because you do not have the support of your parents to study music at uniport. | 22 | 11 | 12 | 5 |
| 3 | Your Parents support your decision to study music in the university (uniport)100% | 5 | - | 26 | 19 |
| 4 | Your parents do not like you studying music in the university (uniport). | 20 | 20 | 5 | 5 |
| 5 | you have musical instruments which your parents bought for you and it makes learning easier for you. | 3 | 5 | 23 | 19 |
| 6 | Learning is challenging because you have no musical instrument of your own to practice with. | 12 | 30 | 3 | 5 |
| 7 | Your parents advised you to change course in your first year in uniport. | 12 | 30 | 2 | 6 |
| 8 | You have been responsible for your academics because you refused to change departments, so work and study are stressful. | 19 | 24 | 2 | 4 |
| 9 | You did not apply to study music, but you were admitted to the department of music and you are happy here. | 17 | 12 | 14 | 7 |
| 10 | You chose music because you could not get admission to your preferred course. | 6 | 4 | 18 | 22 |

| S/N | ITEMS | X | REMARK |
|-----|--|------|----------|
| 1 | Your parent's support for your course has assisted you to a large extent in your academic performance. | 1.8 | Rejected |
| 2 | Your academic performance is very poor because you do not have the support of your parents to study music at uniport. | 3 | Accepted |
| 3 | Your Parents support your decision to study music in the university (uniport)100% | 1.82 | Rejected |
| 4 | Your parents do not like you studying music in the university (uniport). | 3.1 | Accepted |
| 5 | you have musical instruments which your parents bought for you and it makes learning easier for you. | 1.84 | Rejected |
| 6 | Learning is challenging because you have no musical instrument of your own to practice with. | 2.98 | Accepted |
| 7 | Your parents advised you to change course in your first year in uniport. | 2.96 | Accepted |
| 8 | You have been responsible for your academics because you refused to change departments, so work and study are stressful. | 3.18 | Accepted |
| 9 | You did not apply to study music, but you were admitted to the department of music and you are happy here. | 2.78 | Accepted |
| 10 | You chose music because you could not get admission to your preferred course. | 1.88 | Rejected |

Weighted Grand Mean

2.535

The data in table 4.2 showed that the items in number 2, 4,6,7,8, and 9 scored up to the accepted mean of 2.50 or above, thereby making it a positive response from the respondents on the extent to which poor parental support influence the academic performances of their children/wards in music education.

And the items in numbers 1, 3, 5 and 10 obtained a low mean score of 2.50 or below were the negative responses on how poor parental support affects their ward's academic performances in music education. 2.535 were realized after summing the mean of each item which was above the acceptable mean of 2.50. Therefore, poor parental support affects their children's/wards academic performance very badly.

Remedies for Poor Parental Support in University of Port Harcourt

From the findings, children/wards have a great and positive attitude, passion and interest towards music education in uniport regardless of the challenges they face. Hodges (2005) poses the question 'Why Study Music?' 'Among the many activities for students to select for curricular and extra-curricular purposes, how does music compare and remain a practical choice in an academic setting? According to Hodges (2005), becoming a musician can expose a student to opportunities in leadership, build self-esteem, grow work ethic, and develop a dedication towards excellence. Joining other clubs or sports may offer similar qualities to students, but Hodges states that musical

experiences are “unique and invaluable.” In line with this, there are other qualities that music offers which make it a worthwhile subject to explore. Musicians can develop and express these qualities through learning music, which are as follows:

1. Feelings
2. Aesthetic experiences
3. Expression of thoughts
4. Structure in patterns or order
5. Organization of time and space
6. Self-knowledge in learning experiences
7. Self-identity
8. Healing or wholeness as music relates to therapy.

Furthermore, this study reveals the following truth about music students in uniport.

1. Students love music education
2. Music education develops discipline and intelligence in students
3. Students already earn a living through music even as an undergraduate
4. Music education improves the musical achievements and self-esteem of students
5. Music education develops discipline and diligence
6. Students are musically gifted and instrumental learning has a way of enriching their inner lives and as such, they deserve all the support they can get from their parents.

These findings go in line with Parkes and Jones (2012) which suggests that students give several reasons for choosing a career in music, “they enjoyed music, believed that they were good at teaching, (and of course from the findings students already earn a living even as undergraduates in uniport through music teaching), they believed that a teaching career was useful, and viewed teaching as a part of their identity.” Sichivitsa (2007) proposes two internal factors affecting student motivation. The first is a student's self-concept of ability. Having this in mind, Parents should carefully look into these factors before enforcing a different career on their children/wards. These findings suggest that intangible qualities may impact a student's choice of career in music education. Some objective qualities in music can be learned by observation or imitation, but a value needs to be placed on the process of formal education of music to develop a mastery of one's talent and potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found out that the involvement/support of parents towards music education is slim. Regardless, students are still motivated to continue with the program. This study reveals that the parents' differences influence their involvement/support towards music education in uniport. One of the strongest positive influences in acquiring musical skills appears to be the role of the parents. Choosing a career is an extremely important decision that impacts an individual's entire future, so parents should consider this fact. Parents unwittingly can make the past seem perfect and the future terrifying. Some believe that music is not as important as the core academic subjects. However, research and personal observation have shown that the benefits of music education include students' academic success. Parents need to give students their support and encouragement to explore the many benefits of music education. Parents should guard against shooting down the ideas their children may have about their career in music education. If parents react negatively, it may shut down the whole exploration process. Parents need to keep the lines of communication open and encourage their children to gather as much information as possible on their career interest areas. Parents must recognize that their role is simply to act as facilitators in their children's career journey and allowing independent career choices, marks a young person's first real step into adulthood.

Recommendations

Based on the observations made, this article strongly recommends the following:

1. Parents should properly guide their children/wards in their choice of the career rather than dissuade them from their career of interest or try to force them into careers that they are not interested in.
2. Parents should encourage their children to get as much education in music as possible because of its numerous benefits to humanity.
3. They should help children to discover their innate talents and skills by encouraging and supporting them.
4. Parents should be involved, but not in total control over the matters of career choice, so as not to ruin the child's future and dreams completely.
5. It is also recommended for parents to advise their wards in career matters, but do not decide for them.
6. Lastly, parents should support their wads and not dominate over their career choices.

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